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## University Of New Hampshire 17th For Medium Schools With Peace Corps Alumni

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UNH Media Relations

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DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire graduates serving in the Peace Corps have bumped the university up one spot to No. 17 on the list of the top 25 medium-sized schools with alumni serving as volunteers.

Currently 27 UNH alums are active with the Peace Corps, according to a press release issued from the 45-year-old Washington-based volunteer organization. Since its inception, 603 UNH grads have joined the Peace Corps ranks, making UNH the No. 60 all-time producer of volunteers.

"I think UNH has a connection to Peace Corps because of its programs that draw students who want to enter fields such as environment, agriculture, health, and education. The Peace Corps is a way to use one's background and education in a way unlike any other job," says Jennifer Connelly, the Peace Corps representative on campus. "By volunteering overseas in developing nations, one can define their sense of self, clarify their career goals, and better understand the world in which they live."

Common among all applicants, Connelly says, is the desire to help others. Having attained an education and gained experience, the graduates are now at a point in their lives where they want to put both elements into action. This applies to students who are about to graduate as well.

Connelly hosts general information sessions monthly at MUB.

"Attendance has been good, so I know interest is high," she says.

UNH volunteers are now serving in the Dominican Republic, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Malawi, Micronesia, Moldova, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Peru, Romania, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia and are helping with agriculture, business advising and development, teaching English, high school or secondary level math and science, environmental education, forestry, protected areas management, health, and youth development.

Most of the current volunteers graduated within the last six years although one graduated more than 30 years ago. Their major fields of study included education, business administration, health administration, communications, anthropology, biology, wildlife biology/management, forestry, economics, English, environmental studies, journalism, political science, Spanish, social work, sociology and international studies

While it isn't required, traditionally the majority of Peace Corps volunteers are college graduates. Currently, 93 percent have at least an undergraduate degree, with 12 percent of the volunteers also holding a master's degree. The Peace Corps also benefits from high school and community college graduates' willingness to sign on for the 27-month commitment as well. (Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age.)

"As the world changes, so does the Peace Corps. In the 21st century we are responding to host country requests for volunteers who can teach information technology in classrooms, volunteers who can share environmental education and training with affected communities, and volunteers who can work with villages and schools ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic – not necessarily the very same needs that the world had 46 years ago," says Joanna Shea O'Brien, public affairs specialist, for the Peace Corps New England Regional Office.

"However, the primary mission of Peace Corps has not changed since 1961 and that is, to promote world peace and friendship through cultural exchange. In that sense, Peace Corps volunteers are more important than ever. The fact that UNH has so many alumni serving abroad is a testament to the university's commitment to public service and a national trend towards globalism."

Since 1961, more than 187,000 volunteers have helped promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries where they have served.